

Claims

[c1] What is claimed is:

1. An automated method of remotely activating options resident on a device comprising the steps of:
generating an activation key configured to activate an option resident in a memory of an in-field device;
selecting a verification script to at least confirm enableability of the option in the in-field device;
sending the activation key and the verification script to the in-field device wherein the in-field device is capable of executing the verification script;
receiving a report from the in-field device; and
if the report is satisfactory, installing the activation key in the in-field device whereby the option is activated and
if the report is not satisfactory, aborting activation of the option.

[c2] 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of generating the activation key to be unique to the in-field device.

[c3] 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of bundling the activation key and the verification script together and wherein the step of sending the activation

key and the verification script to the in-field device includes sending the bundle.

- [c4] 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of selecting the verification script such that the report is automatically generated when executed by the in-field device.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of selecting includes selecting the verification script to provide the report including at least one of:
 - options currently active;
 - options supported by the in-field device; and
 - dependencies of options supported by the in-field device.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of determining, from the report, whether the option to be activated is one of currently active, not supported by the in-field device, and requires dependent activations and, if the determination is positive, deeming the report unsatisfactory.
- [c7] 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of sending a message prompting contact with a centralized facility if the report is unsatisfactory.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of

monitoring use of the option and providing a warning of an expiration of the activation key.

- [c9] 9. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of generating the activation key upon receiving an access request from the in-field device at a centralized facility.
- [c10] 10. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of receiving a system ID as part of the access request, wherein the system ID is a unique identifier of a customer initiating the access request.
- [c11] 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of verifying whether the access request and system ID are valid.
- [c12] 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the in-field device is configured for medical imaging.
- [c13] 13. A system to respond to a request to remotely enable an option resident on an in-field device, the system comprising:
 - a centralized facility located remotely from an in-field device having an inactive option, and the centralized facility having at least one access computer programmed to:
 - select a verification script to check that the in-field device is in condition to activate the inactive option;

send the verification script to the in-field device wherein the in-field device is capable of executing the verification script; and

install an activation key in the in-field device to activate the inactive option if the verification script indicates that the in-field device is in condition to activate the inactive option.

[c14] 14. The system of claim 13 wherein the computer is further programmed to generate an activation key upon receipt of an access request from the in-field device.

[c15] 15. The system of claim 14 wherein the activation key is based upon a unique host ID received from the in-field device.

[c16] 16. The system of claim 15 wherein the computer is further programmed to electronically transmit the activation key to the in-field device to active the inactive option.

[c17] 17. The system of claim 13 wherein the in-field device is in condition to activate the inactive option if the in-field device supports the inactive option and dependent configuration is unnecessary to activate the inactive option.

[c18] 18. The system of claim 17 wherein the computer is further programmed to receive a report automatically generated by the verification script from the in-field device

indicating whether the in-field device supports the inactive option and whether dependent configuration is necessary to activate the inactive option.

- [c19] 19. The system of claim 13 wherein the computer is further programmed to send a notification to contact the centralized facility if the in-field device is not in condition to activate the inactive option.
- [c20] 20. The system of claim 13 wherein the in-field device is a medical imaging device.
- [c21] 21. A system to remotely enable an option resident on an in-field device, the system comprising:
an in-field device located remotely from a centralized facility and programmed to:
send an access request to the centralized facility to request activation of an option of the in-field device;
receive an activation key uniquely configured to activate the option of the in-field device and a verification script to authenticate a current status of the in-field device;
send a report generated by the verification script to the centralized facility indicating the current status of the in-field device; and
install the activation key to activate the option if the current status of the in-field device is determined to be satisfactory by the centralized facility.

- [c22] 22. The system of claim 21 wherein the activation key is based upon a host ID unique to the in-field device.
- [c23] 23. The system of claim 21 wherein a message prompting communication with the centralized facility is sent to the in-field device if the current status of the in-field device is unsatisfactory.
- [c24] 24. The system of claim 23 wherein the current status of the in-field device is unsatisfactory if the report indicates that at least one of: the option is currently active, the in-field device does not support the option, and absent dependencies preclude activation of the option.
- [c25] 25. The system of claim 21 wherein the activation key and the verification script are received as a bundle.
- [c26] 26. The system of claim 25 wherein the bundle is compressed.
- [c27] 27. The system of claim 21 wherein the in-field device is a medical imaging device.
- [c28] 28. The system of claim 21 wherein the report includes at least one of:
options currently active;
options supported by the in-field device; and
dependencies of options supported by the in-field de-

vice.

- [c29] 29. The system of claim 21 wherein the in-field device is determined to be satisfactory if the option is enableable in the in-field device.